

**REMARKS OF HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO
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COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**2007 NATIONAL MARINE AQUACULTURE SUMMIT
OPENING SESSION**

**Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center
Tuesday, June 26, 2007**

Buenas yan Hafa Adai. Good morning and welcome as we say on my home island of Guam. It is both an honor and a privilege to address you this morning upon the start of the 2007 National Marine Aquaculture Summit. I know this is an occasion that will be marked by productive exchanges, enlightening discussions, and the sharing of both scientific and public policy perspectives on the opportunities in store for our country with respect to the sound, innovative and sustainable development of marine aquaculture.

I want you to know that from the Congressional perspective this is an important dialogue that you are undertaking at this Summit. My colleagues and I look forward to learning of the ideas and the recommendations that the informed discussions will inevitably yield for both the Administration and the Congress to consider on the issues associated with marine aquaculture.

I want to thank Admiral Lautenbacher and Dr. Hogarth for hosting this Summit and for their able leadership at the helm of NOAA and NOAA Fisheries. NOAA is a strong, reliable and trusted federal partner of our coastal and island communities due to their continued efforts and the work of the federal civil servants who work at headquarters, in the field and on the frontlines of the agency. I appreciate their engaging the Congress on the issues important to the mission of NOAA and on the opportunities associated with marine aquaculture.

Dr. Hogarth came up to my office on the Hill a few months ago to familiarize me with the Administration's progress in developing recommended legislation to help entrepreneurs responsibly seize the opportunities before us and to help accelerate the integration of domestic aquaculture into our country's seafood production efforts.

I also want to thank the Secretary of Commerce, the Honorable Carlos Gutierrez, for reaching out to Congress with a legislative proposal toward this end and for inviting me to address you here today at this Summit. As Admiral Lautenbacher mentioned, I am the Chairwoman of the House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans. I assumed this leadership role in January of this year, at the start of the 110th Congress. I am fortunate to serve on the Subcommittee with some very dedicated and talented colleagues, including Congressman Henry Brown of South Carolina, who is the Subcommittee's Ranking Member.

Earlier this year, Congressman Nick Rahall of West Virginia, the Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, and I introduced the National Offshore Aquaculture Act of 2007, at the request of Secretary Gutierrez and the Administration. We did so to signal our desire to work together on this legislation with the Administration and to help engender a dialogue about developing a strong regulatory system for offshore aquaculture in the United States Exclusive Economic Zone that would protect both our country's economic and environmental interests.

We recognize that there are many successful farming operations onshore – including in our own districts of Guam and West Virginia. In the islands, successful aquaculture endeavors have largely sprung from support received through the land-grant system and in particular the T-STAR program for Tropical and Subtropical Agricultural Research. The research conducted to date holds promise for growth in aquaculture. However, we know that we must manage such growth carefully and responsibly with sensitivity to the environment and to our local fisheries and fishing communities. We are encouraged about the opportunity to expand what has been successfully demonstrated onshore into the offshore environment. I remain committed though to strong oversight and to advocating for standards to eliminate and minimize environmental and socioeconomic impacts of aquaculture projects should they be given rise by any legislation Congress might pass in this area. I know that siting and location are important aspects of this dialogue, and that the permitting process that would be developed would need to be carefully constructed. Nonetheless, these concerns should not deter us from working together toward these ends.

I know that this Summit will serve as one means through which ideas for a strong, reliable regulatory system for managing offshore aquaculture can be generated and pursued. Chairman Rahall and I have asked the Government Accountability Office to study the issue of marine aquaculture and to inform us of the ways in which foreign governments have ventured into aquaculture in their waters. To highlight some of the successes and risks involved in their doing so, and to make recommendations for us to consider as we take up the Administration's legislative proposal. Hearings on the bill are soon expected in the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans.

I look forward to taking the ideas generated at this Summit, together with the input from the Marine Aquaculture Task Force, the GAO, and the Oceans Commissions, and evaluating them against the legislation that has been introduced as we begin this discussion on Capitol Hill.

Thank you for your involvement in this emerging industry and in convening here in our nation's capital today and tomorrow to talk about the promise that marine aquaculture holds for our country- that is the promise for our domestic seafood industry and for our economic growth and the sustainability of our environment. I look forward to continuing to work with Chairman Rahall, our colleagues in Congress, Secretary Gutierrez, Admiral Lautenbacher, Dr. Hogarth, and others at NOAA and in our communities on this issue.